

Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 35th Session

Universal Periodic Review of Lao People's Democratic Republic

Statement by Australia

21 January 2020

Thank you, Mr Vice President

Australia commends Laos for its commitment to improving social and economic rights, and for increasing engagement with Human Rights Council Special Procedures Mandate Holders.

Australia recommends that **Laos**:

1. Amend laws that restrict freedom of expression, assembly and association to comply with international human rights law.
2. Facilitate a supportive environment to better enable civil society organisations to operate.
3. Conduct independent, impartial and transparent investigations into all alleged cases of enforced disappearance, including that of Sombath Somphone, ensuring family members are regularly informed of any progress.
4. Establish a formal moratorium on the death penalty with a view to ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR.

[113 words]